

URGING PASSAGE OF RESOLUTION ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH KOREA AT 59TH SESSION OF UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 109.

North Korea has been in the news lately for a number of reasons. In recent months, it has expelled U.N. monitors, withdrawn from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and restarted a nuclear reactor.

In addition, North Korea may have the worst human-rights record in Asia. The regime prohibits freedom of speech, religion, the press, assembly, association, citizens' movements and workers' rights. There are an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 political prisoners in work camps. Accounts by refugees and defectors indicate that inmates are subject to forced labor, beatings, torture and executions.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights convened in Geneva this week and is scheduled to be in session until April 25th. This year one of its most challenging issues will be to determine whether to hold North Korea accountable for its poor human rights records.

I strongly support H. Res. 109, which urges the Commission to pass a resolution addressing human rights abuses in North Korea, and calls on the government of North Korea to respect and protect the human rights of its citizens. If passed by the Commission, it would be a critical first step by member states of the United Nations in demonstrating a multi-national commitment to human rights.

In 1981, North Korea ratified two treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. By ratifying these treaties, North Korea officially affirmed its commitment to internationally recognized human rights and standards. Although no single diplomatic initiative can begin to resolve North Korea's human rights abuses, this Resolution would be an important first step in bringing this issue to the world's attention.

In closing, I would like to remind my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, that on February 11, 2002, we passed, by an overwhelming vote of 402 to 6, a Resolution condemning the selection of Libya to chair the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Libya has failed to demonstrate that it does not support international terrorism. It has also failed to demonstrate that it has abandoned its quest for weapons of mass destruction. To reward these failures with an important and prestigious appointment makes a mockery of what this Commission stands for.

That being said, if the Commission manages to persuade North Korea to open itself up to visits by U.N. human rights experts and other international observers, this would be a significant accomplishment. I urge all members of the United Nations to work towards this goal and urge my colleagues to support this Resolution.

HONORING THE LIFE OF
ACADIANA VETERAN LESTER J.
GUIDRY

HON. CHRISTOPHER JOHN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. JOHN. Mr. Speaker, our community lost a dedicated servant on February 20, 2003. Lester J. Guidry, Commander of American Legion Post 69, lost his battle with cancer. Mr. Guidry was a tireless advocate for Acadiana's Veterans, often serving as their voice in the community.

Mr. Guidry was a veteran of the Korean War, serving with the 25th Infantry Division, 35th Regiment, 1st Battalion, Able Company. He was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he sustained in battle in 1951. Back on the home front, Mr. Guidry became a mountaineering instructor with the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. For 25 years, he taught our young cadets the specifics of winter survival, mountaineering safety and awareness.

Upon his return home to Acadiana, Mr. Guidry became a project coordinator working on behalf of Korean War Veterans. He was tireless in his efforts to help these veterans secure the service medals and accolades they were due.

I knew Lester Guidry well. He constantly interacted with my office on behalf of our local veterans, insuring that cases were tended to and information was located. In 2002, he visited with me in Washington, DC during his trip to retrieve pieces of the damaged Pentagon for display at memorials across Acadiana.

Mr. Guidry's passion for life and service was both inspirational and contagious. He was persistent in his task, making service to our local veterans and their memory his mission in life. I believe he accomplished his mission.

He fought for the ideals he believed in until his final days. He labored to remind of us that "freedom is never free," and that service to country should be recognized and never forgotten. He was an example of patriotism for our community, he touched countless lives in our area and across the country, and he will be sorely missed.

IN HONOR OF NORA RAZON

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a distinguished Californian, Nora Razon, as she is named a San Mateo County Young Woman of Excellence.

Nora Razon is a young woman of tremendous insight and dedication. She took initiative in conceiving of and founding her own organization at Carlmont High School, Chicanas Healing Injustice, Sexism, Prejudice and Animosity (C.H.I.S.P.A.). This organization empowers Latino youth through participation in school and extracurricular activities dealing with the healing of injustice and animosity within and towards the Latino community. Under her direction, C.H.I.S.P.A. has evolved into one of the most successful and well-attended clubs at Carlmont High School.

Nora Razon's leadership has been likewise valuable in East Palo Alto's College Track, a non-profit organization which assists motivated young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods to recognize their full potential and to attend a four-year university of their choosing. She has been credited with helping turn College Track "from a good idea into a successful entity."

Nora Razon is a senior leader in the East Palo Alto chapter of Youth United for Community Action and an active four-year participant in Youth Community Service. She is the Youth Representative on the San Mateo County Commission on Aging, a member of the Student Council, and a mentor to her peers through Carlmont's SOS Program designed to mediate conflicts that arise within the student body.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Nora Razon as she is named a San Mateo County Young Woman of Excellence.

THE CHILD HEALTHCARE CRISIS
RELIEF ACT

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 2003

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, our Nation has been blessed for more than two centuries. At no time in the history of mankind has a society prospered like ours has. Through an industrious spirit, a deep sense of entrepreneurship, and a land teeming with natural resources and human talent, we have created a nation that is the dream of those in the world who lack our good fortune. We have led the world in the area of biotechnology and medical research for almost an entire century. There is no place else on Earth where people flock by the thousands to obtain the best that the arts and sciences of medicine have to offer.

With that said, there has been, however, a well kept secret regarding our nation's healthcare system, which was only recently brought to light by former United States Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher. In his landmark 1999 report, Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, Dr. Satcher describes the crisis faced by our Nation's children who suffer from mental illness. According to this report, one out of every five children in America suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder, yet only one-third of them receive mental healthcare treatment.

Part of the reason for this alarming statistic is that mental health services specific to children are in very short supply. I hear time and time again the frustrations of pediatricians who cannot find available mental healthcare professionals for their patients who require psychological evaluations. There are many parents in our nation who are forced to relinquish custody of their disturbed children because outpatient psychiatric services are either not available or the wait for an appointment is weeks to months away. In my own state of Rhode Island, a physician affiliated with a leading psychiatric children's hospital told me recently that on any given day, up to one-third of the hospitalized youth could be home if only outpatient services were available.